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## ART. XIII.—CRITICAL NOTICES.

- 1.—*Pictures of the Olden Time, as shown in the Fortunes of a Family of the Pilgrims.* By EDMUND H. SEARS. Boston : Crosby, Nichols, & Co. 1857. 12mo. pp. 342.

THIS, if not the most scientific form of genealogical writing, is at any rate the form in which we prefer to receive and read the investigation of family history. We prefer the art which can bid the dry bones live, to the industry which merely collects the dry bones from their graves. Mr. Sears is an artist and a poet, and is, moreover, fortunate in having ancestors who give material for such sketches as these. They come to us at his command as living men, and bring with them the age, the companions, and the scenes with which they were concerned. And what scenes!—the persecutions of the nonconformists under Henry VIII., with London and its people, the buccaneering exploits of Hawkins and Drake on the Guinea coast and the Spanish Main, the tragedies of Flanders and Holland softened by the simple pictures of burgher life, the strife of Arminian with Calvinist, Barneveldt's death and Robinson's Church, and the final scene of a Pilgrim settlement in a recess of New England, all drawn with a taste and enthusiasm, a reverence and a moral earnestness, which mark the union of genius with faith. Such a tribute to one's ancestors is far better than a long list of names, dates, births, marriages, and deaths, which are as great a trial of patience to him who must read as to him who must gather them.

If Mr. Sears has not seen the localities which he describes, he must have read very carefully. Most of his pictures are as accurate as daguerreotypes. The mistakes are few and slight. The description of Amsterdam, however, "as a great, busy city, in which there is no sound of rattling wheels," is rather strongly stated. The Dutch capital is not a Northern Venice, though canals are in all its streets, nor do its barges do the work of gondolas. There are lumbering omnibuses, and awkward cabs, the driver of which runs along by the side of his horse. Amsterdam is more noisy than Brussels. Another mistake is in representing St. Paul's Cathedral in 1535 with "a dome, surmounted by a huge ball." Old St. Paul's was a Gothic edifice, without dome or ball. The present building bears no likeness to that which existed in the time of Henry VIII. It is extremely improbable, too, that a "Crucifixion" by Raphael should have been found at that time in St. John's Abbey, Colchester. And we may add, that the hymns which Job and Lottie sing are quite unlike those which people of their class, or indeed peo-

ple of any class, sang then in England. In Mr. Sears's estimate of Catharine Howard and of Cranmer we cannot fully agree. We are glad that he insists so strongly on the difference between the Pilgrim settlers of the Old Colony and the Puritan settlers of Massachusetts. The former have unreasonably suffered in being confounded with the latter.

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2. — *The Trees of America*. By R. U. PIPER, M. D., Woburn, Mass.

WE can here only call attention to the first two numbers of this elegant and elaborate work, hoping to make it the subject of an extended article in our issue for July.

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3. — *La Vie Arabe*. Par FELIX MORNAND. Paris: Michel Levy Frères. 1856. 16mo. pp. 319.

THE latest production, we believe, of M. Mornand's brilliant pen, is a demonstration of the physical origin of the phenomena of Spiritualism. But his most charming and characteristic work is this volume on the Life of the Arabs in Algeria, which contains the most truthful, graphic, and entertaining description of that people which we have ever found in so small a compass. The page runs over with fun, and the sentences are turned in that deliciously piquant way which only a quick French wit can manage. The whole of Arab life is presented, its light and its shade, its manner and its spirit, its externals and its ideas, its monotony, its passions, and its faith. Wise observations are interspersed with comical experiences, sagacious inferences with grotesque pictures. We have profiles of the pirate, the maraboot, the peasant, and, most amusing of all, of Si Djoha, the Arab Punchinello. The anecdotes related of this last personage will shake the sides of the reader. A volume of such anecdotes would make a fit companion to Mr. Alger's volume of Oriental Poetry.

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4. — *Rachel et le Nouveau Monde. Promenade aux États Unis et aux Antilles*. Paris: A. Cadot. 1856.

THIS work of M. Léon Beauvallet has been translated, and its absurdities have been laughed over by thousands on this side of the ocean. But the best flavor of a book so thoroughly French vanishes in a translation. Those who would know the style, the sentiment, the rat-